

# Self-Confidence in Learning Turkish: A Beginner-Level Analysis

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Received: 28 Feb 2025; Received in revised form: 27 Mar 2025; Accepted: 03 Apr 2025

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**Abstract**— This study explores the self-confidence levels of A1-level students learning Turkish as a foreign language and its impact on their learning process. Self-confidence in language learning is closely linked to motivation, willingness to communicate, and academic achievement. The research follows a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. The study includes 162 students from the English Department at Cihan University in Iraq. Their self-confidence levels were assessed using a self-confidence scale and a Turkish language proficiency test. Additionally, semi-structured interviews provided insights into their experiences. Findings indicate that students generally exhibit moderate to high self-confidence. However, many hesitate due to fear of making mistakes and reluctance to participate in class. Qualitative analyses emphasize the importance of teacher and peer support while identifying fear of mistakes, sensitivity to criticism, and limited vocabulary as barriers. In conclusion, self-confidence plays a crucial role in learning Turkish. Pedagogical strategies that reduce fear of mistakes, create supportive environments, and encourage active language use are recommended. This study contributes to effective teaching strategies by highlighting self-confidence as a key factor in language learning.

**Keywords**— Self-confidence, Turkish language learning, foreign language anxiety, pedagogical approaches, language learning motivation.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language learning is a complex process shaped not only by cognitive processes but also by emotional and psychological factors. In this process, self-confidence is a critical factor that enhances an individual's courage to use the language and actively participate in learning. Individuals with high self-confidence learn the language more effectively without fear of making mistakes, while low self-confidence can increase language anxiety and negatively impact the learning process.

The role of self-confidence in language learning has been extensively examined in the literature. Juliani and Dafit (2024) state that teachers play a significant role in enhancing students' self-confidence through motivation, feedback, and facilitating communication, which contributes significantly to their academic success. Tunçel (2015) emphasizes that self-confidence is a key factor in foreign language learning and that individuals with high

self-confidence achieve greater success in learning Turkish. Ghafar (2023) highlights that self-confidence increases motivation and strengthens individuals' ability to cope with challenges, while Nazarova and Umurova (2016) argue that low self-confidence leads students to remain passive in language learning and avoid verbal communication.

Among the theories supporting the critical importance of self-confidence in language learning, Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis stands out. This hypothesis suggests that high self-confidence facilitates the language learning process, whereas low self-confidence hinders it. Similarly, Horwitz and Young (1991) demonstrate that language anxiety negatively affects individuals' self-confidence and disrupts their learning processes. Moradiousefabadi and Ghafournia (2023) further assert that self-confidence is strongly related to motivation, perseverance, and risk-taking willingness, and that individuals with high self-confidence perform better in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar skills.

### Problem Statement

There is a limited number of studies addressing the impact of self-confidence in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. This gap prevents a full understanding of the psychological barriers faced by students learning Turkish. In particular, the lack of self-confidence among A1-level learners may lead to passivity in communication skills and a decline in learning motivation. This situation highlights the need for pedagogical approaches and teaching strategies based on concrete data.

### Research Aim

The aim of this study is to examine the self-confidence levels of university students learning Turkish at the A1 level and to investigate the factors influencing their self-confidence, as well as how it affects their success in the language learning process. The study also aims to emphasize the importance of self-confidence in developing pedagogical approaches for teaching Turkish.

### Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the self-confidence levels of A1-level students learning Turkish, and what factors influence these levels?
2. What psychological, social, and pedagogical factors affect the self-confidence of students learning Turkish as a foreign language?
3. What is the relationship between students' self-confidence levels and their success in learning Turkish, and how can this relationship be statistically explained?

This study aims to fill a significant gap in the literature by examining the impact of self-confidence on Turkish language learning. The research findings are expected to contribute to the development of pedagogical approaches and the expansion of student-centered practices in teaching Turkish as a foreign language.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Foreign language learning is a multidimensional experience that encompasses both cognitive and emotional processes. In this process, self-confidence is a crucial psychological factor that enhances individuals' ability to cope with challenges in language learning. Self-confidence is generally defined as individuals' belief in their ability to successfully complete a task (Bandura, 2006). The literature clearly demonstrates the critical role of self-confidence in increasing success in foreign language learning. In light of these studies, this section examines how self-confidence develops in learning Turkish and how it can be supported.

The following subsections highlight significant studies that explore the effects of self-confidence on foreign language learning, with a particular focus on Turkish.

### 2.1. Self-Confidence and Foreign Language Learning

Self-confidence is regarded as a motivational source that increases individuals' active participation in the language learning process. Çileli (1990) emphasized the significant role of self-confidence in developing speaking skills in foreign language learning and concluded that a supportive classroom environment enhances students' self-confidence. Chomsky's (1959) concept of "creative language use" and Maslow's (1954) motivation theory suggest that gaining self-confidence positively influences the learning process.

Similarly, Pangestu and Martriwati (2024) identified self-confidence as a determining factor in students' success in speaking skills. Their findings suggest that students with high self-confidence overcome the fear of making mistakes and use the language more effectively. In contrast, a lack of self-confidence negatively affects the learning process due to factors such as classroom anxiety, limited vocabulary, and insufficient practice opportunities.

### 2.2. Individual Differences and Language Anxiety

Ellis (1994) highlighted the importance of individual differences in language learning processes and argued that language anxiety negatively affects students' performance. Correspondingly, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, which identifies language anxiety as a factor that reduces students' self-confidence and negatively affects their motivation.

When evaluated in this context, a negative correlation can be observed between self-confidence and anxiety. In other words, as anxiety levels increase, students' self-confidence decreases, making the learning process more challenging.

### 2.3. The Role of Emotional Factors

MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) argued that emotional factors—especially self-confidence and motivation—are fundamental determinants of success in language learning. In this regard, Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests that meaningful input provided in a low-anxiety environment contributes to self-confidence development, whereas individuals with high affective filters experience greater difficulties in language learning.

Therefore, managing emotional factors and supporting students' self-confidence significantly contributes to the language learning process.

#### 2.4. Willingness to Communicate and Self-Confidence

Given the importance of communication in foreign language learning, self-confidence emerges as a determining factor. Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, and Shimizu (2004) emphasized that self-confidence increases individuals' willingness to communicate in a foreign language and plays a key role in effective communication. In this context, a lack of self-confidence may reduce participation in verbal activities and negatively affect the learning process.

Yousefabadi et al. (2022) reported that a lack of self-confidence limits students' participation in classes, thereby reducing success in language learning. These findings highlight the necessity of considering self-confidence when designing both in-class and extracurricular communication activities.

#### 2.5. Positive Psychology and a Multidimensional Approach

Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) argued that foreign language learning is not solely a cognitive process but also involves emotional and social dimensions. In line with this perspective, positive psychology-based approaches aim to meet students' emotional needs and enhance their self-confidence.

The design of learning environments that provide a supportive classroom climate and meaningful input reinforces students' self-confidence and positively contributes to their learning processes.

#### 2.6. The Impact of Self-Confidence on Language Proficiency

Bandura (2006) frequently emphasized that self-confidence positively influences motivation and persistence. Bong (2002) and Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2005) stated that self-confidence enhances academic performance and strengthens individuals' determination to achieve success.

In the context of foreign language learning, Abdullayeva (2024) found that individuals with high self-confidence demonstrate greater success in pronunciation, vocabulary knowledge, and grammar skills. This further supports the impact of self-confidence on language proficiency with empirical evidence.

#### 2.7. Self-Confidence in Learning Turkish

The literature reveals that studies on the impact of self-confidence in learning Turkish as a foreign language are limited. Tunçel (2015) emphasized that individuals with high self-confidence achieve greater success in learning Turkish, highlighting the importance of a supportive

learning environment. Similarly, Nazarova and Umurova (2016) stated that low self-confidence leads to passivity and avoidance of communication in the process of learning Turkish.

Studies conducted on students learning Turkish in different cultural contexts demonstrate that teaching methods sensitive to cultural differences and positive feedback mechanisms support self-confidence development. This indicates that both pedagogical strategies and emotional support mechanisms play a crucial role in learning Turkish.

#### Conclusion of the Literature Review

This literature review demonstrates that self-confidence plays a critical role in foreign language learning and that supportive classroom environments, meaningful input, and positive teaching approaches enhance self-confidence and positively impact the learning process. It has been observed that individuals with high self-confidence overcome the fear of making mistakes and communicate more effectively, whereas a lack of self-confidence increases language anxiety and negatively affects the learning process.

In the context of learning Turkish, the limited number of studies in the literature suggests that self-confidence is an important determinant. In light of these studies, further research is needed to examine how self-confidence develops in learning Turkish and how educational environments can contribute to this development.

By conducting such research, both teaching methods can be improved and students' learning experiences can be enhanced. This study aims to analyze the effects of self-confidence on students learning Turkish at the beginner level, contributing to both academic literature and pedagogical applications. Therefore, future studies should examine the self-confidence factor across different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and learning environments, providing a broader perspective that benefits both research and practice.

### III. METHOD

#### 3.1. Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. In the quantitative dimension, a self-confidence scale and a Turkish language proficiency test were administered to measure students' self-confidence levels and Turkish language success. In the qualitative dimension, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather students' opinions, allowing for a comprehensive interpretation of the data. This approach enables an in-depth

examination of the relationship between self-confidence and success in learning Turkish, using both statistical data and participant perspectives.

### 3.2. Participants

The study was conducted at the English Department of Cihan University in Iraq. The participants consisted of third- and fourth-year students who were taking Turkish as an elective course. A total of 162 students participated in the study on a voluntary basis. Among the participants:

73 were male, and 89 were female

The majority were native Kurdish speakers, with limited or no prior experience in learning Turkish.

Before participation, all students were informed about the study's objectives and methodology. They were assured that their data would be used solely for scientific purposes. Ethical approvals were obtained, and participation was voluntary.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participant Characteristics	Data
Total Number of Participants	162 Students
Gender Distribution	- Male: 73 - Female: 89
Class Level	- 3rd- and 4th-year students
Age Range	- 18–20: 70 students - 21–24 and above: 92 students
Native Language	- Kurdish (159 students) - Arabic (1 student) - Syriac (2 students)

### 3.3. Data Collection Instruments

#### 3.3.1. Self-Confidence Scale

To assess students' self-confidence levels in learning Turkish, a 20-item, 5-point Likert-type scale was used, designed to measure self-efficacy and self-confidence in foreign language learning. The validity and reliability of the scale were tested, and a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of approximately 0.70 was found, indicating an acceptable level of reliability.

#### 3.3.2. Turkish Language Proficiency Test

A Turkish language proficiency test was administered to measure students' A1-A2 level language skills.

The test consisted of multiple-choice and short-answer questions covering reading, writing, and basic grammar elements.

It was developed based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) A1-level criteria and revised with expert feedback.

#### 3.3.3. Semi-Structured Interview Form (Qualitative Instrument)

A semi-structured interview form was designed to gather detailed insights into students' self-confidence and their experiences in learning Turkish.

The form included questions such as:

*"What factors increase or decrease your self-confidence while learning Turkish?"*

A total of 15 randomly selected volunteer students participated in individual interviews, each lasting 15-20 minutes.

The interviews were recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

### 3.4. Data Collection Process

#### 3.4.1. Quantitative Data Collection

The Self-Confidence Scale and Turkish Language Proficiency Test were administered in a classroom setting during the 4th-5th week of the semester.

Participants were informed about the scope of the study and data collection procedures, emphasizing confidentiality and voluntary participation.

#### 3.4.2. Qualitative Data Collection

After the quantitative data collection phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data.

The interviews were conducted in a quiet setting, recorded, and later transcribed into written form for analysis.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods in line with the study's mixed-methods approach.

#### 3.5.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values) were calculated to determine the relationship between students' self-confidence levels and their Turkish language proficiency.

The Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated to assess the internal consistency of the self-confidence scale.

Some items in the self-confidence scale were negatively worded. These items were recoded before analysis to ensure consistency.

Responses were reverse-scored where necessary so that higher scores consistently represented higher self-confidence levels.

#### 3.5.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews were analyzed using the content analysis method.

Interview recordings were transcribed, and thematic analysis was conducted to identify factors affecting students' self-confidence.

#### 3.5.3. Thematic Coding Process

The raw data were carefully read line by line to generate meaningful codes.

These codes were categorized under broader themes and subthemes (e.g., "fear of making mistakes," "teacher attitudes," "peer support").

The identified thematic findings were integrated with quantitative results, allowing for a comprehensive

understanding of how self-confidence and language learning success were interrelated or differed based on participant responses.

### 3.6. Ethical Considerations

Prior to the study, necessary approvals were obtained from the relevant university departments and faculty management.

Participants were informed in detail about the purpose of the study, the data collection tools, and confidentiality principles.

The voluntary participation principle was strictly followed.

Participants were reminded that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Data were kept anonymous and used solely for scientific purposes.

## IV. FINDINGS

This section presents the quantitative and qualitative findings obtained in the study. First, the quantitative results derived from the self-confidence scale used to evaluate students' self-confidence levels in the process of learning Turkish are discussed. Then, the qualitative interview results that support these findings are presented.

### 4.1. Quantitative Findings

The quantitative analysis determined the self-confidence levels of students in the process of learning Turkish. The scale used in the study included both positively and negatively worded items. The negatively worded items were designed to measure students' negative self-confidence perceptions and were adjusted accordingly in the analysis.

Table 2 Frequency Distribution and Basic Statistics of the Self-Confidence Scale (N = 162)

Item No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
1	I feel comfortable when speaking Turkish.	20	40	50	35	17	2.5	1.2
2 (R)	I hesitate to actively participate in Turkish classes.	5	15	30	45	67	3.9	1.1
3	I think my Turkish pronunciation is clear.	25	35	40	40	22	2.7	1.3
4	I do not have difficulty understanding spoken Turkish in listening activities.	20	35	45	40	22	2.8	1.3
5 (R)	I am afraid of making mistakes while learning Turkish.	5	15	30	40	67	3.9	1.1
6	Learning new Turkish words gives me pleasure.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0
7	I believe I can improve my Turkish writing skills.	5	10	20	50	67	4.1	1.0
8 (R)	I feel unsuccessful in the process of learning Turkish.	10	15	20	30	67	4.0	1.1
9	I enjoy participating in Turkish speaking exercises in class.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0



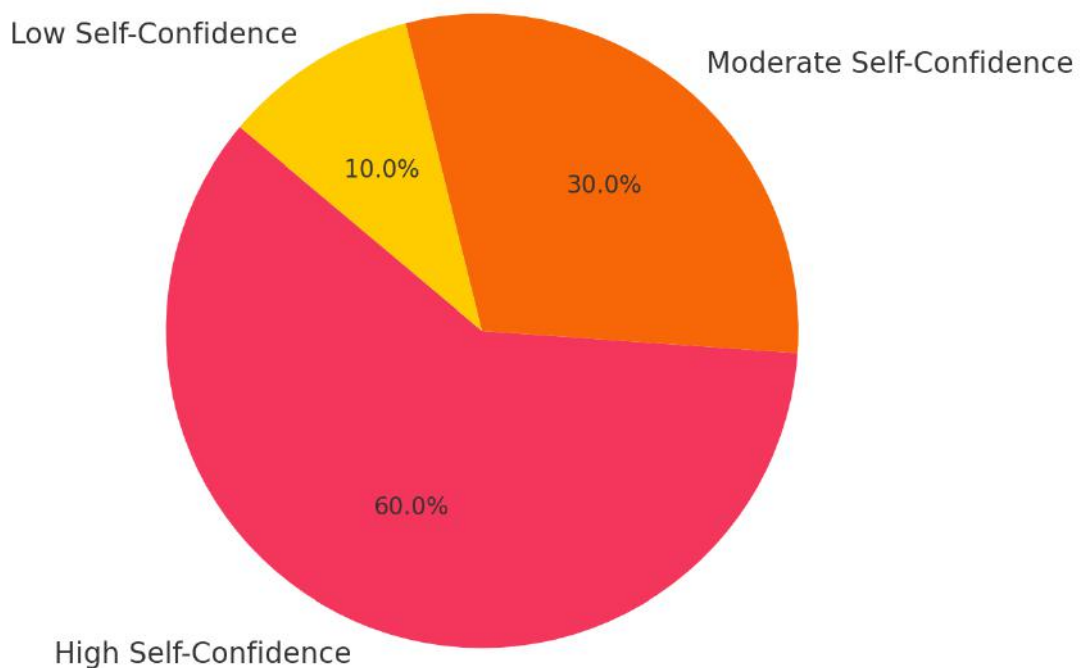
10	My self-confidence increases when I study Turkish.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0
11	I am willing to communicate in Turkish-speaking environments.	25	35	20	15	10	2.6	1.2
12	I believe I can achieve my Turkish learning goals.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0
13	I do not have difficulty completing Turkish assignments or projects.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0
14 (R)	I worry about being misunderstood when speaking Turkish.	10	15	25	35	67	4.0	1.1
15 (R)	Criticism from instructors or peers lowers my confidence.	25	30	25	15	5	2.2	1.2
16 (R)	I avoid active participation in Turkish class.	10	15	20	30	67	4.0	1.1
17	I believe I can overcome the difficulties I encounter in learning Turkish.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0
18	I think that making mistakes helps me improve my Turkish.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0
19 (R)	I avoid participating actively in Turkish class.	10	15	20	30	67	4.0	1.1
20	I feel more confident in learning Turkish day by day.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0

The findings indicate that most students have moderate to high levels of self-confidence. However, the analysis of negatively coded items reveals that fear of making mistakes, sensitivity to criticism, and hesitation in active class participation are significant challenges.

As seen in Figure 2, students experience difficulties in areas such as fear of making mistakes (Item 5), sensitivity to criticism (Item 15), and active participation in the classroom (Items 2, 16, 19). This highlights the importance of teaching approaches that encourage the acceptance of making mistakes as a natural part of the language learning process.

Graph 1 Distribution of Students Self-Confidence Levels

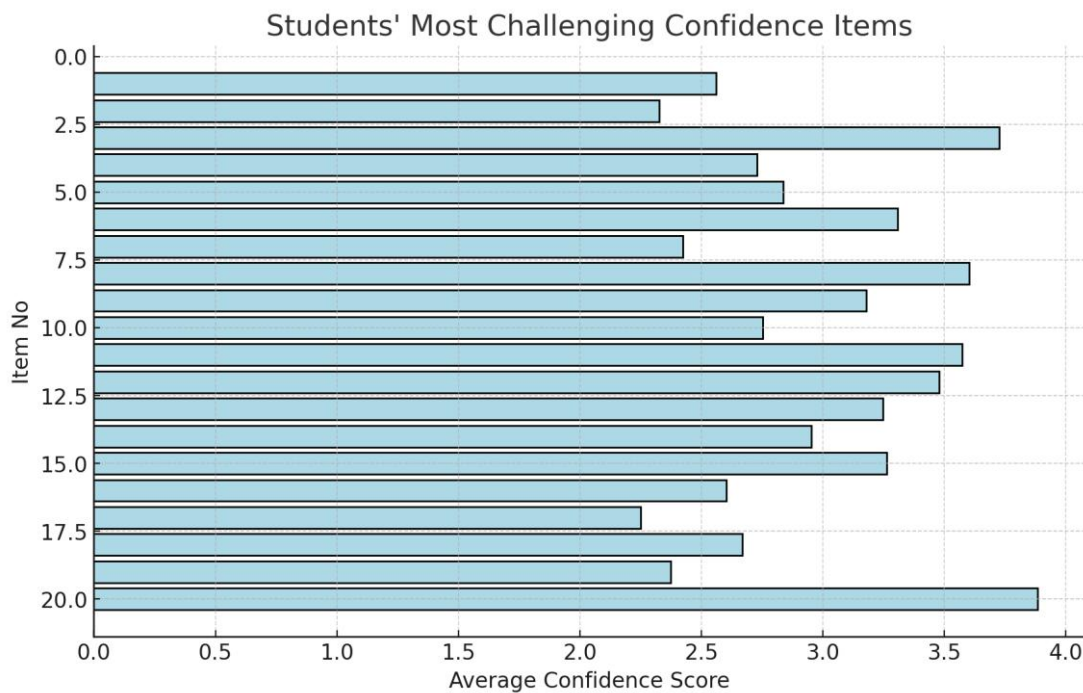
### Distribution of Students' Self-Confidence Levels



The analysis results indicate that students' self-confidence levels generally range from moderate to high. However, low averages in fear of making mistakes and

active participation highlight these as significant factors negatively affecting self-confidence in the language learning process.

Graph 2 Self-Confidence Items Students Struggled with the Most



1.

**General Confidence Level**

The majority of students reported feeling increasingly confident in their Turkish learning process (M = 4.2, SD = 1.0). Additionally, they demonstrated a strong belief in their ability to achieve their Turkish learning goals (M = 4.2, SD = 1.0). These findings suggest that students are motivated in their language learning journey and hold a high level of confidence in their progress.

**2. Confidence in Language Skills**

Students exhibited a high level of confidence in developing their Turkish writing skills (M = 4.1, SD = 1.0). Similarly, a significant proportion of students expressed enjoyment in learning new Turkish vocabulary (M = 4.2, SD = 1.0). These results indicate a positive attitude toward writing skills and vocabulary acquisition.

However, students' confidence in the clarity of their Turkish pronunciation was lower (M = 2.7, SD = 1.3). Likewise, their willingness to communicate in Turkish-speaking environments was limited (M = 2.6, SD = 1.2). These findings suggest that students experience a lack of confidence in their speaking abilities and require more practice opportunities both inside and outside the classroom.

**3. Fear of Making Mistakes and Participation**

A significant portion of students reported being afraid of making mistakes while learning Turkish (M = 3.9, SD = 1.1). This suggests that fear of making mistakes is one of the biggest challenges in the language learning process.

Additionally, students appeared hesitant to actively participate in Turkish classes (M = 3.9, SD = 1.1). This finding highlights that students tend to be reserved in classroom interactions and require supportive strategies to encourage participation.

**4. Teacher and Peer Influence**

The majority of students stated that teacher and peer support plays a crucial role in boosting their confidence. However, a lower percentage of students believed that criticism from instructors or peers negatively impacted their confidence (M = 2.2, SD = 1.2). This finding suggests that when feedback is provided in a constructive and encouraging manner, it does not harm students' confidence but rather contributes to their development.

The analysis of negatively coded items indicates that students fear making mistakes and experience reluctance in classroom interactions. This underscores the importance of

supportive learning environments that encourage viewing mistakes as a natural part of the learning process.

Quantitative data reveal that students experience confidence deficiencies in areas such as fear of making mistakes (Item 5,  $M = 3.9$ ) and hesitation in active classroom participation (Items 2, 16, 19,  $M = 3.9-4.0$ ). These findings align with qualitative statements such as *"I hesitate to speak Turkish for fear of making mistakes"* (Ö1) and *"I struggle to share my ideas in group activities"* (Ö7). Notably, the low averages in negatively coded items indicate that students encounter emotional barriers during the language learning process.

### 5. Factors Enhancing Confidence

High motivation and belief in success (Items 12, 17, 20,  $M = 4.2$ ), along with teacher and peer support (Item 15, negatively coded,  $M = 2.2$ ), emerged as key elements in the quantitative data. These findings were reinforced by qualitative responses such as *"My teacher's encouragement makes me feel comfortable"* (Ö3) and *"Practicing with friends boosts my confidence"* (Ö11).

Quantitative analyses demonstrated that students' confidence levels generally ranged from moderate to high. However, qualitative interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of how this confidence develops, what factors influence it, and under what circumstances it declines. The findings from these interviews are presented below.

### 4.2. Qualitative Findings

The analysis of qualitative data was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of students' confidence levels and their experiences in learning Turkish. The content analysis of semi-structured interviews identified five main themes:

1. Motivations for Learning Turkish
2. Perception of Self-Confidence
3. Challenges and Their Effects
4. In-Class and Out-of-Class Experiences
5. The Role of Teachers and Peers

Table 3 summarizes the findings, showing that students' motivations are shaped by individual, academic, and social factors.

Table 3 Students' Motivations for Learning Turkish

Comment Code	Theme	Subtheme	Comment
S3	Career Goals	Advantage in Job Applications	<i>"I thought knowing Turkish would give me an advantage in job applications, so I decided to learn it."</i>
S7	Personal Development	Improving Language Skills	<i>"I started learning Turkish because learning a new language contributes to my personal development."</i>
S12	Economic Factors	Education and Learning Costs	<i>"The affordable price of Turkish courses also influenced my decision to learn the language."</i>
S5	Family Influence	Family Expectations	<i>"The requests from my family and the fact that Turkish was offered as an elective at the university influenced my decision to learn it."</i>
S10	Social Factors	Participation in Social Activities	<i>"Knowing Turkish will help me participate more comfortably in social events."</i>
S1	Academic Requirements	University Curriculum	<i>"I learned Turkish because I was required to take a Turkish language course at university."</i>
S14	Future Plans	Migration Plans	<i>"I started learning Turkish because I plan to move to Turkey in the future."</i>
S9	Social Factors	Peer Influence	<i>"The fact that my friends were also learning Turkish increased my motivation."</i>
S4	Career Goals	Desire to Work in Specific Sectors	<i>"I needed to learn Turkish because I want to work in the tourism sector."</i>
S15	Ease of Language Learning	Availability of Resources	<i>"There are many resources and courses available for learning Turkish, which made my decision easier."</i>



In conclusion, qualitative data support the quantitative findings, confirming that fear of making mistakes is one of the biggest barriers in the language learning process.

Providing constructive feedback and creating a supportive classroom environment can help overcome this issue.

Table 4 Students' Perception of Self-Confidence While Learning Turkish

Comment Code	Theme	Subtheme	Comment
S2	Positive Confidence Growth	In-Class Interactions	"I feel more confident when questions are asked in class or during speaking activities."
S5	Positive Confidence Growth	Success Experiences	"My confidence increased when I got a good grade in my Turkish exam."
S1	Negative Confidence Perception	Fear of Making Mistakes	"I hesitate because I am afraid of making grammar mistakes, which restricts me while speaking."
S7	Negative Confidence Perception	Shyness in Group Work	"I struggle to share my ideas during group work."
S3	Supportive Factors	Teacher Support	"My teacher's constant encouragement makes me feel more comfortable speaking Turkish."
S9	Supportive Factors	Peer Support	"The support of my classmates boosts my confidence when practicing Turkish."
S4	Personal Factors	Motivation and Interest	"My interest and motivation for Turkish increase my confidence when speaking."
S6	Personal Factors	Previous Language Learning Experience	"Since I had learned English before, I feel more confident while learning Turkish."
S8	Challenges in Language Learning	Pronunciation Difficulties	"I struggle to find the correct pronunciation of Turkish words, which makes me hesitant while speaking."
S10	Challenges in Language Learning	Complexity of Grammar	"The complex grammar rules of Turkish make it difficult for me to express myself."

An analysis of students' confidence perceptions in learning Turkish reveals a strong relationship between confidence growth and fear of making mistakes. While in-class interactions and success experiences help boost confidence, elements such as fear of making mistakes and shyness during group work are the main obstacles to confidence.

This finding highlights the significance of fear of making mistakes as a major challenge in language learning. However, teacher support and encouraging classroom environments have been shown to be effective in reducing this fear.

Table 5 Challenges in Learning Turkish and Their Effects

Comment Code	Theme	Subtheme	Comment
S13	Fear of Making Mistakes	Fear of Making Mistakes While Speaking	"I am afraid of making mistakes when speaking Turkish, so I usually prefer to stay silent."
S7	Language Anxiety	General Language Anxiety	"I constantly feel anxious when learning a new language, which prevents my progress."
S4	Grammar Difficulties	Complex Grammar Rules	"The complex grammar rules of Turkish make it difficult for me to form sentences."

S3	Pronunciation Issues	Difficulty in Correct Pronunciation	"I struggle to find the correct pronunciation of Turkish words, which makes me hesitant while speaking."
S5	Limited Vocabulary	Insufficient Vocabulary Knowledge	"My vocabulary is not broad enough, so I have difficulty expressing myself."
S6	Listening Comprehension Difficulties	Understanding Fast Speech	"Turkish conversations sound too fast to me, making comprehension difficult."
S12	Reading Comprehension Difficulties	Understanding Complex Texts	"I struggle to understand some words and structures in Turkish texts that I read."
S8	Writing Skills Issues	Difficulty in Written Expression	"I find it difficult to construct correct sentence structures in Turkish, which weakens my writing skills."
S10	Challenges in Group Work	Difficulty Expressing Thoughts in a Group	"I struggle to express my ideas in Turkish during group work, so I hesitate to contribute."
S1	Lack of Learning Materials	Insufficient Resources	"I have difficulty finding sufficient and diverse materials for learning Turkish, which slows down my learning process."

Table 6 highlights the impact of students' in-class and out-of-class experiences on their self-confidence. Specifically, in-class speaking exercises, group work, and teacher feedback stand out as key factors in supporting students' confidence.

This table highlights the main challenges students face in learning Turkish. Fear of making mistakes, language anxiety, lack of vocabulary, and the complexity of grammar

rules negatively affect their confidence. Additionally, difficulties in pronunciation, listening, and writing skills make communication more challenging. Students also experience hesitation in group work and classroom interactions, while insufficient learning materials slow down the learning process. In conclusion, providing more supportive resources, teaching methods that reduce the fear of making mistakes, and opportunities for active language practice can improve students' learning experience.

Table 6 Students' Experiences in Using Turkish and Their Impact on Self-Confidence

Comment Code	Theme	Sub-Theme	Comment
S13	In-Class Experiences	Speaking Exercises	"Speaking exercises in class were relaxing for me and improved my Turkish speaking skills."
S2	In-Class Experiences	Group Work	"Group work in Turkish class helped me practice speaking and boosted my confidence."
S15	In-Class Experiences	Teacher Feedback	"When my teacher gives positive feedback, my confidence increases."
S11	Out-of-Class Experiences	Practicing with Friends	"Practicing Turkish with my friends has boosted my confidence."
S5	Out-of-Class Experiences	Daily Use Experiences	"Speaking Turkish while grocery shopping made me feel better about my skills."
S6	Out-of-Class Experiences	Social Media Usage	"Following Turkish content on social media improves my language skills and increases my confidence."
S3	In-Class Experiences	Giving Presentations	"I was very nervous at first while giving presentations in Turkish, but after a few attempts, my confidence grew."

S8	Out-of-Class Experiences	Language Exchange Programs	"Participating in a language exchange program with a Turkish speaker greatly improved my confidence."
S10	In-Class Experiences	Listening Activities	"Doing listening activities in class improved my comprehension skills and boosted my confidence."
S4	Out-of-Class Experiences	Work or Internship Experience	"Having to speak Turkish at my internship allowed me to practice and increased my confidence."

Students' in-class experiences (speaking exercises, group work, teacher feedback) and out-of-class experiences (practicing with friends, daily use, social media, internships) have been effective in increasing their confidence. Real-life practice and a supportive learning environment are key factors in strengthening confidence during the language learning process.

Table 7 highlights the role of teacher and peer support in students' confidence levels. Students expressed that receiving positive feedback from their teachers and practicing Turkish with their friends significantly contributed to their self-confidence.

Table 7 The Impact of Teachers and Peers on Students' Confidence

Comment Code	Theme	Sub-theme	Comment
S12	Teacher Support	Gentle Feedback	"My teacher's gentle feedback reduced my fear of making mistakes."
S7	Teacher Support	Encouraging Attitude	"I feel more confident when my teacher encourages me to speak Turkish."
S3	Teacher Support	Personalized Support	"When my teacher explains the topics I struggle with individually, I feel more comfortable."
S9	Peer Support	Practicing the Language	"I feel more comfortable speaking Turkish with the support of my friends."
S15	Peer Support	Assistance in Group Work	"I feel more at ease speaking when my friends help me during group activities."
S1	Teacher Support	Tolerance for Mistakes	"When my teacher says that making mistakes is normal, I feel more encouraged to speak Turkish."
S10	Peer Support	Positive Social Environment	"Having my friends support me when speaking Turkish boosts my confidence."
S6	Teacher Support	Creating a Safe Classroom Environment	"I feel more confident speaking because our teacher makes us feel that making mistakes is not a problem."
S14	Peer Support	Daily Conversations	"Having daily conversations with my friends helps me feel better about my Turkish."
S4	Teacher and Peer Influence	Overall Supportive Environment	"Both my teacher and friends encouraging me to practice Turkish increase my confidence."

When evaluating the role of teacher support and peer influence on students' confidence levels, students expressed that positive feedback from teachers and peer support significantly contributed to their confidence. However, some students perceived their teachers' criticism as a factor that negatively affected their confidence. This finding highlights the importance of teachers using an encouraging tone when providing feedback.

### General Evaluation and Conclusion Guidance

The findings comprehensively reveal the factors influencing students' self-confidence. Strengthening teacher support, reducing the fear of making mistakes, and increasing opportunities for both in-class and out-of-class language practice are recommended strategies for enhancing students' confidence.

In conclusion, students' motivation, changes in confidence levels, challenges encountered, classroom and extracurricular experiences, as well as teacher and peer support, emerge as key factors in the process of learning Turkish as a foreign language.

## 5. Discussion

This study examined in detail the self-confidence levels of A1-level students learning Turkish as a foreign language and the impact of self-confidence on the language learning process. The findings reveal a strong relationship between self-confidence, language learning motivation, willingness to communicate, and academic achievement. Consistent with previous studies in the literature (Juliani & Dafit, 2024; Tunçel, 2015; Ghafar, 2023), our research confirms that students with high self-confidence tend to be more successful in language learning, while the fear of making mistakes negatively affects self-confidence.

### 5.1. The Impact of Self-Confidence on the Turkish Learning Process

The study results indicate that self-confidence is a crucial factor in students' Turkish learning processes. Although students generally have moderate to high levels of self-confidence, they express concerns related to the fear of making mistakes, sensitivity to criticism, and reluctance to actively participate in class. In particular, students exhibit lower self-confidence in speaking skills ( $M = 2.6$ ,  $SD = 1.2$ ), highlighting the need to increase opportunities for speaking practice. This finding aligns with Pangestu and Martriwati's (2024) research, which emphasizes the role of self-confidence in speaking proficiency.

Students reported that their fear of making mistakes reduces their active participation in class. Studies on language anxiety by Horwitz and Young (1991) show that fear of making mistakes is one of the main factors that diminish self-confidence in the language learning process. Similarly, our study found that students hesitate due to their fear of making mistakes, which negatively affects their learning experiences. This finding is also consistent with Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis. Students with low self-confidence struggle more in the language learning process, whereas those with higher self-confidence use the language more comfortably and effectively.

### 5.2. The Role of Teacher and Peer Support

One of the significant findings of this study is the critical role of teachers and peers in shaping students' self-confidence. Most students reported that positive feedback from their teachers and support from their peers increased their confidence. This result supports the study by Juliiani and Dafit (2024), which highlights the role of teachers in fostering self-confidence. Encouraging attitudes and

constructive feedback from teachers help reduce students' fear of making mistakes and enable them to use the language more confidently. Similarly, peer support and opportunities to practice Turkish in social settings positively influence self-confidence.

However, some students perceived teacher feedback negatively, particularly when criticism was too harsh or insufficiently constructive. According to Bandura's (2006) self-efficacy theory, individuals' beliefs about their learning abilities are directly influenced by teacher feedback. This suggests that teachers should adopt more supportive and motivational strategies in their feedback processes.

### 5.3. The Relationship Between Language Anxiety and Self-Confidence

The inverse relationship between self-confidence and language anxiety is clearly evident in this study's findings. Research by Ellis (1994) and Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) indicates that high levels of language anxiety lower students' self-confidence and hinder their learning processes. Our study also found that a lack of self-confidence is one of the primary contributors to language anxiety. Particularly, students' fear of making mistakes while speaking makes them hesitant to express themselves.

In this context, as emphasized by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), it is essential to consider students' emotional states and provide supportive learning environments to enhance their self-confidence. Krashen's (1982) hypothesis also suggests that students with a low affective filter learn languages more easily, whereas those with a high affective filter face greater difficulties in language learning. Therefore, teachers should implement strategies to reduce language anxiety in the classroom, which can significantly contribute to increasing students' self-confidence.

### 5.4. Strategies to Improve Self-Confidence for Turkish Language Learners

Based on the research findings, several strategies can be proposed to enhance the self-confidence of students learning Turkish as a foreign language:

1. Increase opportunities for speaking practice. To overcome self-confidence issues in speaking, classroom discussions, group activities, and role-playing exercises should be implemented.
2. Adopt teaching approaches that reduce the fear of making mistakes. Creating a classroom environment that fosters tolerance toward mistakes and emphasizes that making mistakes is a natural part of learning is essential.
3. Provide positive feedback and constructive criticism. Teachers should ensure that their

feedback encourages students rather than discouraging them. Negative feedback should be minimized to prevent damage to students' self-confidence.

4. Offer opportunities for real-life language use. Encouraging students to use Turkish in social settings, participate in language exchange programs, and engage in real-life communication scenarios will help boost their self-confidence.
5. Provide individualized support mechanisms. Since language learning is a personal process, instructional approaches should be tailored to meet the unique needs of different learners.

This study highlights the critical role of self-confidence in language learning and contributes to developing pedagogical approaches that support confidence-building among A1-level learners of Turkish as a foreign language. Future research could further investigate self-confidence across different age groups, cultural contexts, and learning environments to provide more comprehensive insights.

Additionally, although this study examined self-confidence through both quantitative and qualitative data, there is a need for long-term observational studies. Longitudinal research tracking students' self-confidence over time could yield deeper insights. Moreover, future studies could explore the impact of technology-supported teaching methods—such as digital language learning platforms and AI-based language teaching tools—on students' self-confidence development.

In conclusion, self-confidence is a key factor influencing students' success in learning Turkish. Therefore, teachers and educators must develop intentional and effective strategies to help students build their self-confidence throughout the language learning process.

## V. RESULTS

This study examined the self-confidence levels of A1-level students learning Turkish as a foreign language and revealed the impact of self-confidence on the language learning process. The findings indicate that self-confidence is directly related to language learning motivation, academic achievement, and willingness to communicate. While students generally exhibited moderate to high levels of self-confidence, they also expressed concerns regarding the fear of making mistakes, sensitivity to criticism, and participation in class activities.

The quantitative data from the study show that students generally have high confidence in their language skills but require more support in speaking and pronunciation. Students reported hesitancy due to the fear

of making mistakes and concerns about being misunderstood, which led them to avoid active participation. Additionally, teacher and peer support played a significant role in enhancing students' confidence.

Qualitative analyses suggest that self-confidence is influenced by various individual and environmental factors. Encouraging attitudes from teachers, constructive feedback, and supportive classroom environments are crucial in boosting students' self-confidence. Furthermore, as students find opportunities to use Turkish in social and academic settings, their confidence grows. However, sensitivity to criticism, hesitation in speaking within a group, and limited vocabulary knowledge emerge as key factors weakening students' confidence.

In conclusion, increasing self-confidence in the language learning process enables students to participate more actively in learning activities and use the language more boldly. Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the confidence of students learning Turkish as a foreign language:

**Develop instructional strategies to reduce the fear of making mistakes.** It should be emphasized that mistakes are a natural part of language learning, and students should be encouraged to view errors as a learning opportunity.

**Create a supportive and encouraging learning environment.** Constructive feedback and positive reinforcement from teachers will contribute to increasing students' confidence.

**Increase opportunities for speaking practice.** Group work, paired dialogues, and class discussions can help students develop confidence in using the language.

**Provide opportunities for students to use Turkish outside the classroom.** Social activities, language exchange programs, and real-life communication opportunities can support self-confidence development.

**Adopt pedagogical approaches that reduce language anxiety and enhance motivation.** Task-based and communication-oriented teaching methods that allow students to experience success should be prioritized.

This study provides valuable insights into the development of self-confidence among students learning Turkish as a foreign language and aims to contribute to the development of effective strategies for teaching Turkish. Future research should examine the effects of self-confidence across different age groups and learning environments to produce broader findings. Considering the critical role of self-confidence in the language learning process, promoting student-centered and supportive teaching approaches is of great importance.



### 1. First Level Subtitle about the Research Question (2. Level Title)

#### Turkish Learning Self-Confidence Levels of A1-Level Students

The study found that the self-confidence levels of students learning Turkish at the A1 level ranged from moderate to high. However, factors such as fear of making mistakes, sensitivity to criticism, and hesitation in classroom participation negatively influenced their confidence. The quantitative findings indicated that most students had a positive attitude toward Turkish learning, but speaking and pronunciation were the most challenging areas in terms of self-confidence. The qualitative data supported these findings, revealing that teacher and peer support played a significant role in boosting confidence.

### 2. Second Level Subtitle about the Research Question (3. Level Title)

#### Factors Affecting the Self-Confidence of Students Learning Turkish

Several psychological, social, and pedagogical factors were identified as affecting the self-confidence of students learning Turkish. Psychological factors included fear of making mistakes and foreign language anxiety, which created hesitation in classroom participation. Social factors involved peer support, teacher encouragement, and opportunities for real-life communication. Pedagogical factors included the classroom environment, teaching methods, and feedback from instructors. The study emphasized that reducing anxiety and providing a supportive learning atmosphere significantly enhanced self-confidence.

### 3. Third Level Subtitle about the Research Question (4. Level Title)

#### The Relationship Between Self-Confidence and Turkish Language Learning Success

Statistical analyses showed a significant positive correlation between self-confidence levels and students' success in Turkish language learning. Students with higher self-confidence demonstrated better performance in reading, writing, and listening comprehension. However, those with lower confidence levels, particularly in speaking activities, tended to avoid participation. The findings aligned with previous research suggesting that self-confidence contributes to motivation, persistence, and overall success in language acquisition.

### 4. Fourth Level Subtitle about the Research Question (5. Level Title)

#### Strategies for Enhancing Self-Confidence in Turkish Language Learning

Based on the findings, several strategies were proposed to enhance students' self-confidence in learning Turkish:

1. Increasing Speaking Practice Opportunities – More classroom discussions, role-playing activities, and real-life speaking situations should be integrated into lessons.
2. Reducing Fear of Making Mistakes – Encouraging students to view mistakes as a natural part of learning and fostering a positive and mistake-tolerant classroom environment.
3. Providing Constructive Teacher Feedback – Instructors should offer positive reinforcement and avoid overly critical feedback that could harm students' confidence.
4. Encouraging Peer Support and Collaborative Learning – Group activities and peer interaction should be encouraged to create a comfortable and motivating learning atmosphere.
5. Expanding Learning Beyond the Classroom – Real-life exposure to Turkish through social interactions, digital platforms, and language exchange programs can significantly enhance confidence.

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